



THE DEACONESS HOSPITAL, EDINBURGH.

By G. A. GIBSON, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P.Ed.

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There can be no doubt that in past times the revolt against the monastic system of the Church of Rome has deprived Protestant countries of much useful help in ministering to the sick. While Roman Catholic nations have had the devoted assistance of Sisters of Mercy as hospital and district nurses, those countries which embraced the Reformation have been contented, until the present century, with the type of nurse rendered immortal by the pen of Dickens. During the second half of this century, however, along with an entire change in the methods of nursing, and a total reversal of the type of nurse, there have grown up in different countries guilds or sisterhoods connected with the Protestant churches.

In the modern Deaconess movement Germany took the lead. Through the indefatigable exertions of the Rev. Dr. Fliedner, the Hospital of the Deaconess Mother House was opened at Kaiserswerth in 1836, and its success has been conspicuous. In addition to a large hospital, there are three institutions for the reception of persons of unsound mind at Kaiserswerth; and the Mother House has between thirty and forty daughter establishments with about eight hundred Sisters.

The Bethany Central Deaconess House and Hospital in Berlin was founded in 1847, and since that date has undergone successive enlargements on account of its wonderful success.

At Bielefeld there is a striking development of Christian enterprise in aid of the sick. The Bethel Home for Epileptics was founded here in 1867. Two years later, the Sarepta Deaconess House was established, and has already

nearly two hundred stations and five hundred Sisters. The Nazareth Brethren Institute was founded in 1877, and has undergone such expansion as to have over sixty stations and nearly two hundred Brethren. In addition to the care of the Bethel Home, the authorities supervise an agricultural colony, called Wilhelmsdorf, established in 1882, and a Home for Inebriates, named Friedrichshütte, dating from 1883, together with some smaller agencies for the good of the people.

Within the Church of England several Sisterhoods have arisen since the humble commencement at Park Village in 1845, just fifty years ago, and by some of these the nursing of the sick has been undertaken.

In England, however, the Deaconess movement is best known in connection with the Mildmay Mission, whose great success has given it a world-wide reputation. Since the year 1860, when the Mission was founded by Mr. and Mrs. Pennefather, the organisation has steadily grown in usefulness and prospered in every way.

It was in time found that the Deaconesses of the Mildmay Mission were hampered by the want of a Hospital, not only for the purpose of obtaining some training as nurses, but also for the reception of some of the sick poor who could not be nursed at their own homes. In 1877 an old factory in Turville Square, Bethnal Green, was transformed into a Hospital, containing thirty-three beds, which was the first Deaconess Hospital in England. For fifteen years work was actively carried on in this building, but it was found at last to be unsuitable for the growing demands made upon it. A new Hospital, containing fifty beds, was accordingly erected in Austin Street, which was opened in 1892. The Mildmay Mission Hospital has in connection with it a Convalescent Home at High Barnet, which is supported by Lord and Lady Tankerville.

In Scotland the Deaconess movement has been inaugurated by the National Church. The Committee on Christian Life and Work of the Church of Scotland, with the sanction of the General Assembly, opened in 1887 the Deaconess Institution and Training Home, chiefly owing to the exertions of the Rev. Professor Charteris, D.D. From the first it was

intended that the Deaconesses should receive a certain amount of training as nurses, and for some years, through the courteous kindness of the Managers and Lady Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary, they formed part of the Nursing Staff. Practical difficulties, however, chiefly connected with the long probation required by the regulations of the Royal Infirmary, prevented the arrangement from attaining such a full measure of success as had been hoped for, and it became apparent that, in order to carry out the combined training of a Deaconess as regards religious instruction and medical information, in the most thorough manner, a distinct Hospital, closely connected with the Deaconess Home, would be necessary.

During the year 1892 practical steps were adopted with the view of realising these instructions. A strong Committee, acting under the Committee on Christian Life and Work, with the sanction of the General Assembly, was appointed, with Mr. J. A. S. Millar, W.S., as Convener, and charged with the duties of obtaining plans for the building of the Hospital, and collecting funds for its erection and support. Success crowned the exertions of the Committee. A suitable site was acquired alongside St. Ninian's Mission Buildings in the Pleasance, which had, a few years before, been founded for the practical labours of the Deaconesses. Money was liberally subscribed, not only by the members of the Scottish Church, but by friends and well-wishers in other religious bodies. Suitable plans were adopted, the building operations were actively carried out, and the Hospital was finished in the summer of 1894.

The little Hospital bears on its front the dedication, "Christo in Pauperibus," and it has also a memorial stone, showing that it is to be held in remembrance of the Lady Grisell Baillie, the first Deaconess of the Church of Scotland.

The Deaconess Hospital was formally opened on 11th October 1894 by Lord Polwarth, a nephew of the saintly lady whose name is placed upon its walls, in the presence of the Moderator of the Church, Professor Story; the Chairman of the Deaconess Board, Dr. Cameron Lees; the Chairman of the Hospital Board, Mr. J. A. S. Millar, and many devoted

friends of the Church. From the admirable address delivered at the opening by Professor Charteris, the following extract may fitly be taken, as showing the intentions of the founders. Speaking of the very definite object in view, he said: "It is to complete the education of a Scottish Deaconess, to furnish her for her work. No more here than in the Deaconess House will we insist that every pupil shall undertake to be a Deaconess. No more here than there do we expect that everyone shall be a member of the Church of Scotland; but here, as there, no one shall be entered on our books save those whose avowed object is to do Christian work among the poor. We offer our training to Deaconesses, foreign missionaries, and other Christian workers, of whatever Church, who are to do work kindred to that of a Deaconess.

"It will be seen—it is perhaps superfluous to say it—that we shall not aim at competing with the great infirmaries in training the professional nurse. It is not the professional sick-nurse, but the Christian worker we shall train. I do not mean, however, that ours will be a less practical, a less valuable, or even a less thorough, training. It is possible—even probable—that a year or eighteen months spent in our wards, where every probationer will see all that is done within the walls, and will learn to make the best of sometimes limited resources, will bring it about that our nurses will come to be regarded as the best in the whole world for the homes of the poor; but still, I repeat, that it is the Christian visitor and not the mere nurse that we educate here. She will be trained also to say a word in season to the sufferers upon the pallets—some word that will soothe an anxious spirit; and she will be taught to do this under the restraint of Christian common sense, and with hearty horror of the meanness of ecclesiastical proselytising. This will be her function in after life, when she is a Parish Deaconess, working by herself. Every Deaconess will henceforth be trained in nursing as a part of her work, and I expect that we shall also have some Deaconesses trained here who will make nursing the work of their lives. They will be a special subdivision, Deaconess-Nurses. I expect, moreover, that besides those trained here, some who have completed their term, and

earned their diploma for nursing elsewhere, will come to the courts of the Church and ask for the Church's commission, saying: 'I am a nurse, here are my credentials; I ask you to make me a Deaconess-Nurse.'

"This, then, is our first speciality. We are a Home for teaching sick-nursing as part of the education of Christian workers.

"Our second is that we are—our Hospital is—a part of the organisation of the corporate Church. So far as I know, we are the first that can be so described in Protestant Christendom. The individual philanthropist, the individual bishop, or the benevolent committee, has often equipped an hospital,—we are familiar with such hospitals in Germany, in France, in England; but this Hospital, reared by personal gifts, is dedicated as a part of Christ's Church in its corporate capacity. The Protestant Church has been long in learning this lesson; the Romish Church is far ahead of us, and what gives Rome her strength to-day—and she has the divine blessing on it—is, that many of her best and noblest men and women have bound themselves to the service of the Church in ministry to the poor."

The Hospital has accommodation for 22 patients. On the ground floor is the doctors' room, with the case-book library, the instrument cupboard, and every appliance for the examination of patients and the performance of operations. On this floor also is the dining-room for the nursing staff, the parlour of the Deaconess Superintendent, and the kitchen. On the first floor is the male ward, containing ten beds, with a bath-room adjacent, and on the second floor is the female ward, of the same size and with the same accommodation. The third floor consists of a small ward for cases requiring isolation, and bedrooms for the nurses and servants. In the yard behind the Hospital are the laundry and mortuary.

The entire cost of building and furnishing the Hospital has been a little below £4000. The whole sum has been subscribed by friends of the movement; and the Institution, opened free of debt, has thus been presented to the Church as a means of furthering her usefulness to the Scottish people.

The affairs of the Hospital are administered by a representative Board of Management, the convener of which is Mr. J. A. S. Millar, W.S., to whose indefatigable exertions the success of the scheme is in great part due. The care of the patients has been entrusted to the following medical and surgical staff:—

Dr. Claud Muirhead, consulting physician; Mr. John Duncan, consulting surgeon; Dr. G. A. Gibson, physician; Mr. Alexis Thomson, surgeon; Dr. F. W. N. Haultain, physician for diseases of women; Dr. George Mackay, surgeon for diseases of the eye; Dr. Ralph Stockman, assistant physician; and Mr. Logan Turner, assistant surgeon; with Dr. J. G. Cattanaach, house physician and surgeon. The nursing of the patients is in the hands of Miss Ella Pirrie, Deaconess-Superintendent, who, in addition to supervising the two staff nurses in the discharge of their duty, is charged with the training of the Deaconess Probationers.

One word, lastly, in regard to the patients. The Hospital is freely open to the sick poor of every creed, and from every district. During the eight months which have elapsed since it was opened, it has received members of such different communions as the Church of Rome and the Jewish Church, while several have been sent from Highland valleys, as far away as the confines of Caithness.

